

**CITY OF FITCHBURG
WATER / WASTEWATER COMMISSION**

COMMISSION MINUTES

January 9, 2013

The City of Fitchburg Water / Wastewater Commission held their regularly scheduled meeting on January 9, 2013 at the JA Provincial Building located at 1200 Rindge Rd, Fitchburg, MA.

The meeting commenced at 4:30 p.m.

Members present: George Siener
 Lenny Laakso, Commissioner DPW
 Rick Healey
 Carol Brown
 Ronald Lubianez
 Ralph Romano
 Michael McLaughlin

Members Absent: none

Others present: Denis Meunier, Deputy Commissioner Water
 Joseph Jordan, Deputy Commissioner W.W
 Mary Jane Franklin, Clerk

ITEM # 1: Approval of last meetings minutes:

The minutes for the December 12, 2012 meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

ITEM # 2: Public Forum:

No one from the public attended.

ITEM # 3: Review and discussion of draft Fiscal 2014 Budget:

Mr. Meunier reported on the FY 13 budget and the proposed FY 14 budget. There will be an anticipated revenue increase of \$208,826 for FY 14 vs. FY 13. Mr. Meunier stated that the FY 14 will not be significantly different than FY 13. However, to accommodate an increase in the annual debt service payment he is asking for a transfer of \$89,000 from retained earnings to revenue. The increase in debt service is associated with the proposed water main replacement loan that was talked about at the last meeting. The current Water Enterprise Fund retained earnings stands at \$1.42M. Mr. Meunier noted that there are three employees who are shared between Water, Wastewater and DPW: Environmental/Civil Engineer, Business Manager, and Community Project Planner. Mr. Meunier reported there could be some fluctuation in the salaries that are paid by each department for these three positions as they are paid for work that they do specifically for each department. Data processing costs have increased due to monthly billing. Costs associated with treatment have decreased due to the treatment operators optimizing chemical feeds while continuing to maintain water quality. In an effort to reduce energy costs Mr. Meunier is investigating the possibility of replacing the motor and drive associated with the Mare Meadow Reservoir pump. Fringe benefits and other city costs stayed the same. Mr. Meunier and Mr. Jordan have met with Dick Sarasin, the City Auditor, to discuss the FY14 budgets, Mr. Sarasin indicated that he will review with the Mayor and the other members of the financial team the annual payment for City related services that the enterprise funds contribute to the General Fund. Mr. Meunier will go before the Capitol Improvement Commission on January, 22, 2013 to discuss the water main replacement project and then will submit a petition to City Council for the

loan authorization. Mr. Meunier met with Wright Pierce earlier today and anticipates having an estimated construction cost by the end of the week. Mr. Meunier briefly discussed funding options that may be available for the water main project, including the possibility of receiving funding from the State Revolving Fund at a lower interest than might be available through normal City borrowing.

ITEM # 4: General Department Update:

Leominster sludge:

Mr. Jordan explained Leominster's sludge needs to be thickened to be compatible with Fitchburg's process. He has reviewed this with Leominster and is hopeful about a resolution. The agreement with Leominster ends in 2014.

Plant operations:

Mr. Jordan reported that, with the recently purchased and installed thickening equipment, the East Plant is able to process 3 times the volume of sludge in the same period of time than with the old equipment. He explained that better thickening will reduce overall disposal costs. In addition, the new Superintendent along with the Maintenance Engineer have worked hard to maximize the performance of the dewatering equipment and have improved solids from an average of 19% to a consistent average of 20% - 26% solids.

Mr. Jordan presented an annual summary of discharge permit compliance over the last twelve months. The City reported only 53 violations out of 5,375 possible violations. Mr. Jordan attributed the increased compliance, primarily, to initiating a new mode of treatment suggested by Wright Pierce Engineering. It is now possible, in wet weather, to treat flow rates of 25 – 28 million gallons before bypassing as compared to the previous 15 million gallons prior to the modifications. The goal is to eliminate all bypasses by 2016.

A letter was presented to DEP to withdraw the air quality permit.

Ongoing projects:

Mr. Jordan reported Fitchburg was on schedule with the CSS projects. The current CSS project has stopped temporarily and will resume in late March or early April. The CSS4 separation project in area of Summer St., Boutelle St, John Fitch, Lincoln Ave. and Pacific St. is being finalized and will be going to bid within the next 6 weeks. The contract will be awarded by June 2013 with construction starting in July 2013. After speaking with DEP, regarding SRF funding. Mr. Jordan learned there will be approximately 5% principle forgiveness, which will be a savings of \$675,000. Mr. Jordan will be petitioning City Council for a \$17M loan authorization in February. \$16M will be for CSS4D construction with the additional amount going to the design of the final stage of upgrades at the East Plant. Upgrades at the plant need to be completed by December 2016 per the terms of the EPA Consent Order.

Financial standing (1/2 year):

Mr. Jordan reported that FY13 is on schedule with revenue and expense projections. The Wastewater Enterprise Fund currently has \$2M in retained earnings. Over the next 2 years there will be \$30M in loans. Mr. Jordan expects the FY14 budget to be similar to FY13 except for CSS work.

OTHER BUSINESS:

Mr. Jordan reported that Lunenburg will be asked to contribute to the sewer upgrades on John Fitch based on their requested flow allocation. After a brief discussion, both Lunenburg and Westminster will be sent drafts of the FY14 budget in order to keep them informed of changes that may affect their treatment costs.

Mr. Romano announced his resignation from the Commission at the end of February.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 14, 2013 at 4:30 pm at the Water Office.

The meeting adjourned at 5:45 pm.

Minutes Prepared by: _____
Mary Jane Franklin
Senior Clerk